

(Anussati-ṭ,ṭhāna) Udāyī Sutta

The Discourse to Udāyī (on the Bases of Reflections)

A 6.29/3:322-325

Theme: The six bases of recollection

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2008

1 Udāyī

1.1 MONKS NAMED UDĀYĪ. The name Udāyī is a common one in the Pali Canon, and it is not always easy to identify them. The Commentaries provide us with some useful information:¹

Dīgha Commentary	— 3 elders named: Lāl'udāyī, Kāl'udāyī and Mahā Udāyī;		
	Sampasādaniya Sutta (D 28.20)	Mahā Udāyī.	DA 3:903
Majjhima Commentary	— Bahu,vedaniya Sutta (M 59 = S 36.19) = Mahā Udāyī	<i>paṇḍita</i> Udāyī	MA 3:114 = SA 3:79
	— (Ratha,vinīta Sutta, M 2:145)	Lāl'udāyī 2	MA 2:138
	— Laṭṭikôpama Sutta (M 66.3)	Lāl'udāyī	MA 5:16
Sāmyutta Commentary	— Pañcak'aṅga Sutta (S 36.19 = M 59) = Mahā Udāyī	<i>paṇḍita</i> Udāyī	SA 3:79 = MA 3:114
	— Taṇhā-k,khaya Sutta (S 46.26)	Mahā Udāyī	SA 3:149
Aṅguttara Commentary	— Cūḷanikā Sutta (A 3.80)	Lāl'udāyī.	AA 2:345
	— Nirodha Sutta (A 5.166):	Lāl'udāyī.	AA 3:298
	— Udāyī Sutta (A 6.29*)	Lāl'udāyī.	AA 3:357
	— Nāga Sutta (A 6.43*) = Tha 689-704	Mahā Udāyī	AA 3:369
	— Nibbāna Sukha Sutta (A 9.34)	Lāl'udāyī.	AA 4:194
Thera,gāthā Comy	— Kāl'udāyī Thera,gāthā (Tha 527-536)	Kāl'udāyī	ThaA 2:221
	— Udāyī Tha (Tha 689-704) = A 6.43*	Mahā Udāyī	ThaA 3:7-11
Vinaya Commentary	— Saṅgh'ādisesa 1 (V 3:110)	Lāl'udāyī 2	VA 517
	— Pācittiya 16 (V 4:60)	Lāl'udāyī 2	VA 804
Dhammapada Comy	— Lāl'udāyī Vatthu 1 (DhA 5.5)	Lāl'udāyī 1	DhA 2:31
	— Lāl'udāyī Vatthu 2 (DhA 11.7)	Lāl'udāyī 1	DhA 3:124
	— Lāl'udāyī Vatthu 3 (DhA 18.4)	Lāl'udāyī 1	DhA 3:344
Jātaka Commentary	— Nidāna Vatthu (Jātaka Intro)	Kāl'udāyī	J 1:54, 96 f
	— Sūkara J (J 153)	(Lāl'udāyī 1)	J 2:9-12
	— Soma,datta J (J 211)	Lāl'udāyī 1	J 3:167

Here is a list of early Buddhist elders named **Udāyī** and their references in the early texts:²

(1) Mahā Udāyī (Udāyī the great)	D 28.20 /3:115 (DA 3:903); M 59 /1:396-400 = S 36.19 /4:223 f (<i>paṇḍita</i> Udāyī, MA 3:114 = SA 3:79); M 66 /1:447 (MA 5:16, qu at Kvu 528); S 35.133 / 4:121-124 (?), 35.234 /4:166-168 (?), 36.19 /4:223 f), 46.26 /5:86 f (<i>anusandhi,kusalo</i> , ³ SA 3:149), 46.28 /5:88 f, 46.10 /5:89 f; A 6.43 /3:344-346 (AA 3:369) = Tha 689-704 (ThaA 3:7-11); A 5.159 /3:184 (?), 9.37 /-
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¹ This list is inexhaustive: it is only to give some us some idea of the occurrences of the name Udāyī.

² The refs here are not exhaustive. See also BHSD: Udāyin, for Skt forms & refs of the name.

³ "Skilled in connecting ideas," ie in seeing how ideas relate to one another.

4:426-428. He is said to be a “brahmin’s son” (*brāhmaṇa,putta*, ThaA 3:7).

(2) Kāl’udāyī

(Udāyī the black)

A 1.14.4/1:25 (AA 1:301), **9.42/4:449** (AA 4:205); **Tha 527-536** (ThaA 2:221); **J 1:54**, 86 f; Ap 543/1-29/500-502 (ApA 532). He is said to be a “courtier’s son” (*āmacca,putta*, ThaA 3:7, & the Bodhisattva’s connatal and childhood playmate in his last birth, J 1:54, 86).

(3) Sakul’udāyī(Udāyī the wanderer)⁴

M 77/2:1-22, **79/2:29-39**; **A 4.30/2:29**, **4.185/2:176**; **Miln 213**; **DhsA 163**.

(4) Lāl’udāyī 1

(Udāyī the foolish)

V 1:115 (crow-voiced);⁵ **M 136.6/3:208 f** (MA 5:16); **A 3.80.5/1:228** (AA 2:345), **5.166/3:192-196** (AA 3:298), **6.29/3:322-325**, **9.34/4:414-418** (AA 4:194), **9.42/4:449-451**; **DhA 5.5/2:30-32**, **11.73/3:124-126**, **18.4/3:344-349**; **J 153/2:9-12**, **211/3:167**. He is said to be *kovariya,putta* (ThaA 3:7).⁶

(5) Lāl’udāyī 2

(Udāyī of the Vinaya)

Saṅghādisesa 1 = **V 3:110** (Seyyasaka, pupil of Lāl’udāyī, VA 517), 2:38-51 (self-abuse);
Saṅghādisesa 2 = **V 3:119 f** (physical contact with women);
Saṅghādisesa 3 = **V 3:127 f** (lascivious talk with women);
Saṅghādisesa 4 = **V 3:131-133** (speaking in praise of sexuality);
Saṅghādisesa 5 = **V 3:135-137** (acting as a match-maker);
Nissaggiya 4 = **V 3:205 f** (monk’s robe handled by a nun);
Nissaggiya 5 = **V 3:207-209** (monk accepting robe from nun);
Pācittiya 7 = **V 4:20** (limit to accepting robes from laity);
Pācittiya 16 = **V 4:60** (not to keep wool over a distance and stipulated period) (Lāl’udāyī, VA 804);
Pācittiya 30 = **V 4:68** (misappropriating sangha property);
Pācittiya 89 = **V 4:171** (sitting cloth that is over-sized) (Udāyī is “fat,” *mahā,kāya*).
DhA 9.2/3:4 f (Seyyasaka, Lāl’udāyī’s pupil, occasions Saṅghādisesa 1);
Miln 124 cf DPPN: Udāyī (2).⁷

The first three are sometimes mentioned together (ThaA 3:7). The Commentaries generally identify our Udāyī (of the **Anussati-ṭ,ṭhāna Sutta** A 6.29) as the fourth Udāyī, that is, **Lāl’udāyī 1** (foolish Udāyī). The Dhammapada Commentary has three stories of Lāl’udāyī I, as follows:

Lāl’udāyī Vatthu 1 DhA 5.5/2:31 [1.3.4];⁸
Lāl’udāyī Vatthu 2 DhA 11.7/3:124-126 = SD 50.2(2) [1.2]; and
Lāl’udāyī Vatthu 3 DhA 18.4/3:344-347 = SD 50.3(2) [1.3.1].

⁴ Neither text nor commentary gives any clue to his name: *sakula* can mean (1) *sa-kula*, “one with a family,” ie from a high class or prominent family; (2) *sakula* (Skt *śakula*), a kind of fish (J 5:405), Skt *śakulika*, “belonging to a fish; fisherman” (SED); (3) *sākula* (Skt mfn) “perplexed, bewildered” (SED).

⁵ *Kāka-s,saraka*; also *kāka-s,sara* (m & mfn), ie hoarse-voiced (DA 450; MA 2:35 = 3:382 = AA 4:148 qu at NcA 439; VbhA 488).

⁶ *Kovariya* is obscure, but it is Marathi for the sicklepod or Chinese senna (*Cassia obtusifolia*), an aromatic plant known locally as “ketepeng kecil” or jue ming zi in Chinese. This is probably the name of Lāl’udāyī’s father.

⁷ Cf V 1:115; see also D:RD 3:100.

⁸ See also (Anubaddha) **Bhikkhu S** (S 47.3) = SD 24.6a Intro (1).

The Vinaya has a number of serious rules made on account of “Udāyī,” which the Vinaya Commentary identifies with “Lāl’udāyī.”⁹ He is also said to be “fat or obese” (*mahā,kāya*, V 4:171). Buddhaghosa portrays him harshly, as “a certain lascivious monk who is devoted to staggering around like a beast, terribly fond of sleep”¹⁰ (VA 3:517), “one who whose conduct benefits neither himself nor others.” (MA 2:138).¹¹ This is probably **Lāl’udāyī 2**.

The Suttas, on the other hand, generally depict Lāl’udāyī as being foolish (M 136.6),¹² ignorant (A 6.29.1c),¹³ or quarrelsome (A 5.166),¹⁴ but never lascivious nor luxurious. The Commentaries present him as being slow-witted (DhA 11.7),¹⁵ or as being very timid (*sāraḥja,bahula*) (J 126).¹⁶ Both these accounts probably refer to the same person, that is, **Lāl’udāyī 1**.

From the close parallel between **the Lāl’udāyī,thera Vatthu 3** (DhA 18.4) [1.3.1] and **the Sūkara Jātaka** (J 152) [1.3.2], we can surmise that they refer to the same person, that is, Lāl’udāyī 1. If this surmise is acceptable, then we can conclude that he is an old monk, probably someone who (like the old Subhadda of **the Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta**)¹⁷ joined the order in old age and had difficulty undergoing the training. It is unlikely that he would be capable of being lustily lascivious so as to be the “first offender” (*ādi,kammika*) of at least six Vinaya rules, as shown above. It is more likely that he is **Lāl’udāyī 1**, a slow-witted, over-anxious and quarrelsome old coot. The lascivious recalcitrant of the Vinaya is **Lāl’udāyī 2**. As such, it is likely that there are two Lāl’udāyīs.

1.2 LĀL’UDĀYĪ (1) PRESENTED AS BEING SĀRAJJA. From the wealth of accounts and stories about him in the ancient texts, he is an important monk in his own right, albeit for all the wrong reasons, especially that he is in the habit of saying and doing the wrong things! On the other hand, Lāl’udāyī or Udāyī, in some of his stories, also serves as a good example of Buddhist humour.¹⁸ In **the Soma,datta Jātaka** (J 211), he is said to be a very timid or obsequious (perhaps, also “nervous”) (*sāraḥja,bahula*) person, who was unable even to remember properly a single stanza after a year’s coaching.¹⁹ A shorter version of this story is found in **the Lāl’udāyī,thera Vatthu 2** of the Dhammapada Commentary.²⁰ A related story is found in **the Naṅgālisa Jātaka** (J 123) [1.6.2]. As such, Lāl’udāyī (1) can be disambiguously called **(Sāraḥja) Lāl’udāyī**.²¹

The (Sāriputta) Nirodha Sutta (A 5.166) records how Udāyī openly contradicts teachings by Sāriputta, first before the order, and then before the Buddha himself, who censures him. Even Ānanda is uncertain how to deal with Udāyī here, and is censured by the Buddha.²²

1.3 UDĀYĪ PRESENTED AS BEING SLOW-WITTED. The more humorous stories about Lāl’udāyī depict him as being slow-witted. **The Lāl’udāyī,thera Vatthu 3** (DhA 18.4) and **the Sūkara Jātaka** (J 153), for example, are parallel commentarial stories about Lāl’udāyī, with a touch of scatological humour.

1.3.1 The Lāl’udāyī,thera Vatthu 3 (DhA 18.4). According to **the Lāl’udāyī,thera Vatthu 3** (DhA 18.4), Sāriputta and Moggallāna are popular Dharma teachers who won the praises of the masses who bring with them various allowables as gifts to them. Udāyī, jealous of them, announces to the masses that he too is able to talk Dharma like the two foremost monks.

⁹ VA 517, 804.

¹⁰ *Bhanta,miga,sappatibhāgo niddārāma,tādīm anuyuttānam aññataro lola,bhikkhu..*

¹¹ *N’eva atta,hitāya paṭipanno no para,hitāya.*

¹² **Mahā Kamma,vibhaṅga S** (M 136.6/3:208) = SD 4.16.

¹³ **(Anussati-ṭ,thāna) Udāyī S** (A 6.29.1c/3:323) = SD 24.8a.

¹⁴ **(Sāriputta) Nirodha S** (A 5.166/3:192-196 = SD 47.15; AA 3:298.

¹⁵ DhA 11.7/3:124-126 = SD 50.2(2).

¹⁶ J 126.8/2:165 = SD 50.2(3).

¹⁷ See D 16.6.20/2:163 f = SD 9.

¹⁸ See **Past Stories of Lāl’udāyī Thera** = SD 50.2.

¹⁹ J 126.8/2:165 = SD 50.2(3).

²⁰ DhA 11.7/3:123-126 = SD 50.2(2).

²¹ On *sāraḥja*, see **Piṇḍolya S** (S 22.80) = SD 28.9a (3).

²² A 5.166/3:192-196 = SD 47.15; AA 3:298.

When the time comes for the public to invite Udāyī for his Dharma talk, he could neither deliver a discourse nor recite a word of scripture, despite sitting on the Dharma seat on four occasions. Finally, fed up with his empty boasts, the angry crowd threatens to pelt him with clods of earth, sticks and so on, for his gall to falsely presume equality with the two foremost monks. Udāyī then flees with the angry crowd at his heels, and stumbles into a cesspool!

When the monks who have gathered in the Dharma hall discussed the mishap, the Buddha declares that even in the past, Udāyī is like that, alluding to **the Sūkara Jātaka** (J 153), and closing his discourse with this Dhammapada verse:

*Asajjhāya,malā mantā
anuṭṭhāna,malā gharā
malaṃ vaṇṇassa kosajjaṃ
pamādo rakkhato malaṃ*

Non-recitation is defilement for mantras,
lack of effort is a defilement for homes,
laziness is a defilement for beauty;
heedlessness is a defilement for a guard. Dh 241²³



Pursed lips

1.3.2 The Sūkara Jātaka (J 153). The introduction to **the Sūkara Jātaka** (J 153) essentially tells the same story of Udāyī's jealousy of the popularity of Sāriputta and Moggallāna, but does not name him, referring only to an "old elder" (*mahallaka therā*). The Buddha declares that even in a past life, Udāyī is foolishly boastful not realizing the implications of his loose words.

Once upon a time, a lion, having finished his meal, went down to the pool for a drink. Seeing a boar there, he marked him as a future meal. Not to frighten the boar away, the lion backed off. The boar saw this and misread this to be the lion's fear of him! He challenged the lion to a fight, but the lion replied it was not the time, and would fight him the following week.

The foolish boar returned to his herd and boasted of his "victory." The wiser boars were terrified and warned him of his impending death. They advised him to roll over the seers' dunghill over the next seven days, and let the filth dry on himself.

When the fight day came, he was told to stand upwind so that the lion would smell his stink! The lion, used to cleanliness, understandably backed away in disgust. The foolish boar was delirious with pride, but his terrified herd, fearing the lion would return one day, decided to leave for another place. At the end of the story, the Buddha reveals that the boar was "the old elder" and the lion was he himself (as the Bodhisattva).²⁴

1.3.3 Padañjali Jātaka (J 247). It is said that once at Jeta,vana, the two foremost disciples, Sāriputta and Moggallāna, were discussing a Dharma question. The monks who heard the discussion praised the elders, but Lāl'udāyī merely pursed his lips (*oṭṭhaṃ bhañji*), thinking, "What is their knowledge compared with mine?" When the monks noticed this, they left him and the gathering dispersed. The monks who gathered in the Dharma Hall talked about this, and when the Buddha heard this, he added that even in the past Lāl'udāyī had done the same thing.

Once, when Brahma,datta was ruling in Benares, the Bodhisattva was his minister who advised him on finance and royal duties [a privy councillor].²⁵ Now the rajah had a son (the crown prince), Pād'añjali, who was lazy loafer. When the rajah died, the court discussed consecrating Pād'añjali as rajah. The Bodhisattva knew that he was but a lazy loafer and told the court so.

²³ DhA 18.4/3:344-347 = SD 50.3(2).

²⁴ J 153/2:9-12 = SD 50.3(3). See V Fausboll, *Ten Jātakas*, Copenhagen & London, 1872:12-15 (Pali), 63-65 (Eng tr), 94 f (nn).

²⁵ *Attha,dhammānusāsaka amacca*, a common phrase (DhA 2:71; J 2:31, 74 ~ *sabb'atthaka,amacca*, 105, 264, 3:21, 115, 317, 337, 4:197); as *attha,dhammānusāsaka* (BA 253; J 2:96, 98, 125, 173, 175, 203, 3:400, 5:57, 6:255, 259, 330, 424). WHD Rouse: "adviser in things spiritual and temporal" (J:C 2:183); "minister...adviser in things temporal and spiritual." However, I think both these attempts are conjectural. It is also possible here that *attha* (Skt *artha*) means "wealth, finance" and *dhamma* (Skt *dharma*) refers to "duties," both in their popular non-tt senses.

A royal trial (*vinicchaya*) was held. First, they presented a wrong decision, and ask Pād'añjali if they had decided correctly. Pād'añjali pursed his lips. The Bodhisattva received the impression that he *must* be wise; for, he seemed to know that it was a wrong decision, after all.

On the second day of the trial, the courtiers presented a right decision and ask Pād'añjali if they had decided correctly. *Again*, Pād'añjali pursed his lips! Now, the Bodhisattva *knew* that Pād'añjali was ignorant after all! For, he could not distinguish right from wrong.

The courtiers were convinced that Pād'añjali was a fool, and made the Bodhisattva rajah.

The Buddha identified the Pād'añjali as Lāl'udāyī.²⁶

1.3.4 The Lāl'udāyī,thera Vatthu 1 (DhA 5.5). The Dhammapada Commentary has another short humorous story of Lāl'udāyī acting out his fantasy of being a great Dharma teacher, which could be construed as a symptom of equality complex (in the Buddhist sense), that is, taking himself to be as good as the great elders.

Lāl'udāyī,thera Vatthu 1

The Story of the Elder Lāl'udāyī

[We may pretend to act wise, as long as we remain silent]

(DhA 5.5/2:31)

“Even if a fool, all his life” (*yāva,jīvam pi ce bālo ti*). This Dharma teaching was given by the Blessed One while he was staying in Jeta,vana in connection with the elder Udāyī.

It is said that when the great elders had left the Dharma assembly, he would go and sit on the Dharma seat. Now, one day, some visiting monks saw him, and thinking that he must be some great elder, asked him a question related to the aggregates (*khandha*) and so on. Discovering that he knew nothing at all, they chided him, saying, “Who is this monk, who should live in the one and same monastery as the Buddhas, but does not know anything even about the aggregates, elements and the sense-spheres?” And they reported the matter to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One, expounding the Dharma to them, spoke this verse:

*Yāva,jīvam 'pi ce bālo
paṇḍitaṃ payirupāsati
na so dhammaṃ vijānāti
dabbi sūparasam yathā*

Even if a fool, all his life,
associates with the wise,
he understands not the Dharma,
just as a spoon tastes not the soup.

(Dh 64; **Udāyī-t,thera Vatthu**, DhA 5.5/2:31 f)

At the end of the teaching, the visiting monks were freed from their mental influxes.²⁷

1.4 LĀL'UDĀYĪ PRESENTED AS BEING IGNORANT. Being slow-witted, Lāl'udāyī is also ignorant, but the stories also present him to be foolishly, even childishly, arrogant, especially toward the great elders. If we put all such qualities together, it is likely that Lāl'udāyī is *a hard-headed, petulant but nervous old monk* (that is, one who has renounced in old age, but is not serious in his training). Occasionally, we catch

²⁶ J 247/2:263 f.

²⁷ DhA 5.5/2:31. See also (**Anubaddha**) **Bhikkhu S** (S 47.3) = SD 24.6a Intro (1). “Influxes,” *āsava* (lit “inflow, outflow”) comes from *ā-savati* “flows towards” (ie either “into” or “out” towards the observer). It has been variously tr as “taints” (“deadly taints,” RD), “corruptions, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, evil (influence), influx,” or simply left untranslated. The Abhidhamma lists 4 *āsava*: the influx of (1) sense-desire (*kām'āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence or becoming (*bhav'āsava*), (3) wrong views (*diṭṭh'āsava*), (4) ignorance (*avijjāsava*) (D 16.2.4, Pm 1.442, 561, Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937). These 4 are also known as “floods” (*ogha*) and “yokes” (*yoga*). The list of 3 influxes (omitting the influx of views) is prob older and is found more frequently in the Suttas (D 3:216, 33.1.10(20); M 1:55, 3:41; A 3.59, 67, 6.63). The destruction of these *āsavas* is equivalent to arhathood. See BDict under *āsava*.

a glimpse of his effort to join in a discussion, and interestingly, this is often with the two foremost monks [1.3], or with Ānanda (A 3.80, below), or with the Buddha himself (M 136, below).

Although Udāyī has little Dharma knowledge he does not hesitate to join in—or more correctly, awkwardly intrude—a difficult conversation, even with the Buddha himself. We find him censured by the Buddha for his obtrusive show of ignorance, once in **the Mahā Kamma,vibhanga Sutta** (M 136). The Sutta Commentary says that Udāyī, desiring to speak, he stretches out his neck, moves his jaws and twitches his face, and is unable to sit still, plainly before the Buddha who can see him without the need of the divine eye, mental reasoning nor omniscience (MA 5:16 f).²⁸

However, when the Buddha makes an effort to teach him personally, he sits in stony silence despite the Buddha’s asking him the same question thrice! This is in fact what happens in **the (Anussati-t,ṭhāna) Udāyī Sutta** (A 6.29). Ānanda is present on both occasions—in the Mahā Kamma,vibhanga Sutta (M 136) and here [§1b]—despite his encouragement, Udāyī is still unable to answer. In the latter case (A 6.29), the Buddha then questions Ānanda, who is able to answer the Buddha, although not completely [§§6 f].

As a result of such encounters, we find Udāyī (as recorded in **the (Ānanda) Abhibhū Sutta**, A 3.80) becoming jealous of Ānanda, and confronting him with the fact that although he has been close to the Buddha he has not profited by it. The Buddha at once censures him and assures that Ānanda will certainly reach perfection in that very life itself.²⁹

1.5 LĀL’UDĀYĪ PRESENTED AS BEING CONCEITED. Two stories of Lāl’udāyī, one from a sutta, the other a Jātaka, show him as being conceited, and are humorously instructive.

1.5.1 The Taṇḍula,nāli Jātaka (J 5). It is said that during food-ticket meals (*salāka,bhatta*) (when almsfood is distributed by lots), Lāl’udāyī, whenever he receives a poor share, he would make a big fuss with Dabba Malla,putta (the meal-assigner, *bhatt’uddesaka*). To teach him a lesson, the monks make him the meal-assigner. However, he causes such a confusion that Ānanda is sent by the Buddha to find investigate. When Ānanda reports back to the Buddha, he relates **the Taṇḍula,nāli³⁰ Jātaka** (J 5) to show that even in the past Lāl’udāyī has been a foolish appraiser (*agghā,panika*).

Once upon a time, the Bodhisattva was an appraiser to the rajah of Benares, with whom he always dealt with fairly. The rajah, being greedy, thought that he was paying too much, and appointed a greedy rustic fool (*gāmika,manussa lola,bāla*), who happened to pass by, as appraiser. One day, a horse-dealer brought five hundred horses, and the appraiser valued the whole lot as a single measure of rice (*taṇḍula,-nāli*)!

The outraged horse dealer sought advice from the Bodhisattva, who then, before the whole court, asked the appraiser how much a measure of rice was worth. He answered that it was worth the whole of Benares and its suburbs! The ministers burst into laughter, putting the rajah to shame.

*Kim agghati taṇḍula,nālikāyaṃ
assāna mūlāya vadehi rāja
bārānasim santara,bāhiraṃ
ayam-agghati taṇḍula,nālikā ti.*

How much is a measure of rice worth?
Tell us what is the worth of the rajah’s horses:
Benares, within and without (he said),
that’s how much a measure of rice is worth!

The rajah then dismissed the fool, and reinstated the Bodhisattva. Lāludāyī is identified with the false appraiser.³¹

1.5.2 Pasūra. The wanderer (*paribbājaka*) Pasūra was a formidable debater who wandered about carrying a jambu branch. Where he stopped, he would set it up, challenging anyone who wished to debate with him, to remove it. When he came to Sāvattḥī, Sāriputta took up the challenge and defeated him.

²⁸ M 136.6/3:208 = SD 4.16. On the Buddha’s omniscience, see **Kaṇṇaka-t,thala S** (M 90/2:125-133) = SD 10.8 Intro (2) & **Sandaka S** (M 76) = SD 35.7.

²⁹ A 3.80.5/1:228 = SD 53.1; AA 2:345.

³⁰ *Taṇḍula*, “rice-grain (ready for cooking)” (BM beras); *nāli*, *-nāli*, “a measure, a tube-like container (of rice).”

³¹ J 5/1:123-126.

Later, he became a monk under Lāl'udāyī, but later defeated him in discussion, and then retreated to the dwelling of the heretics.

Later, he returned to challenge the Buddha himself, but as he entered Jeta,vana, the deity presiding over the gate struck him dumb. Unable to utter a word, he sat listening to the Buddha delivering **the Pasūra Sutta** (Sn 4.8).³²

1.6 LĀL'UDĀYĪ AS A QUIET PERSON. There are two moving stories about Lāl'udāyī that present him as a quiet person, even one who is eager to learn, but fails to do so.

1.6.1 The Naṅgalīsa Jātaka (J 123). This story—the past story plough-pole (*naṅgalīsa*)³³—relates another ancient incident of Lāl'udāyī's fumbling ways, similar to those related in the Soma,datta Jātaka (J 211) and **the Lāl'udāyī,thera Vatthu 2** [1.2]. On auspicious occasions, he would chant verses from the Tiro,kuḍḍa Sutta,³⁴ and during a funeral, he would chant verses from the Maṅgala Sutta!³⁵ When the monks sat discussing Lāl'udāyī's ineptitude, the Buddha adds that even in the past, he was like that.

Once upon a time, when Brahma,datta was ruling in Benares, the Bodhisattva was a world-famed teacher (*disā,pāmokkha ācariya*) with five hundred brahmin youths as students. One of these brahmin youths was weak-minded, and was unable to master any text nor art, but he was very devoted to the Bodhisattva, serving him like a slave.

One day after supper, the brahmin youth gave a traditional massage to the Bodhisattva, after which he told the youth to prop up the bed's leg. The devoted youth, not finding any stick, used his own leg as a prop. When the Bodhisattva woke up in the morning, he found the youth still propping the bed up. After hearing the youth's explanation, he was impressed and decided to coach him in a special way so as to benefit him.

The Bodhisattva decided to teach him how to observe things and learn how to use similes and to reason. He was instructed to report what he saw during his chores. One day he saw *a snake*, and when the teacher asked, what it was like, he replied that it was like a “plough-pole” (*naṅgalīsa*), which impressed the teacher and had high hopes for him.

On a second occasion, he saw *an elephant*. When the teacher asked for a simile, he answered that it was like a plough-pole. The teacher said nothing, thinking that after all the elephant's trunk and tusks do look like plough-poles anyway.

On the third occasion, the youth ate *sugar-cane*. When the teacher later asked for a simile, he again answered that it was like a plough-pole! The teacher was unimpressed but remained silent.

On the fourth occasion, the youth had some *molasses with curds and milk*, and again, when asked, replied that they were like a plough-pole! The milk might take the shape of the vessel it filled, but here he missed the comparison entirely. He realized that the youth would never make it as a scholar.

*Asabbattha,gāmiṃ vācam
bālo sabbattha bhāsati
nāyam dadhiṃ vedi na naṅgalīsam
dadhi-p,payam maññati naṅgalīsan ti*

A word that has not a universal sense,
the foolish uses it in a universal sense:
he knows not that this milk is not a plough-pole—
he thinks the milk and plough-pole to be the same!

At the end of the teaching, the Buddha identifies Lāl'udāyī as the dullard.³⁶

1.6.2 Mah'osadha Jātaka (J 546). **The Mah'osadha or Mahā Ummagga Jātaka** (J 546, the past story of the tunnel) is one of the best known of the longer Jātaka stories. It is a great Indian literary work, one which exemplifies the Bodhisattva's perfection of wisdom (*paññā,pāramī*). The long classic tale opens with **Vedeha**, the rajah of Mithilā dreaming of four fires that was later outshone by a huge fifth fire. This is a premonitory dream of the rise of the young sage **Mahōsadha** (the Bodhisattva) who would outwit the four evil and cunning advisers of the rajah.

³² Sn 4.8/824-834/161-163; SnA 2:538-540.

³³ *Naṅgalīsa* mean the beam or pole of a plough (S 1:104, an elephant's trunk compared to it).

³⁴ Khp 7.1/6 = Pv 1.5.1/4 f = SD 2.7.

³⁵ Khp 6.6 = Sn 263.

³⁶ J 123/1:446-449.

Apprehensive of the dangers that Mahosadha posed to their positions, the four royal advisers tried various plots and ploys to discredit or destroy him. But both Mahosadha and his wise wife, Amarā, managed to foil every one of them.

In due course, Vedeha was in danger of losing his kingdom to Kevaṭṭa, the advisor and general of rajah Cūḷanī of Uttara Pañcāla, who planned to conquer the whole of India. Mahosadha, the general of rajah Vedeha, succeeded in defeating Kevaṭṭa through sheer trickery and cunning.

Finally, Cūḷanī planned to capture Vedeha by subterfuge, that is, by making him fall in love with his beautiful daughter, Pañcāla,caṇḍī. The foolish Vedeha fell for this trickery, and would have lost his kingdom, if not for the ingenuity of Mahosadha in building a tunnel system out of Cūḷanī's castle, so that Vedeha could escape with Cūḷanī's queen, son, and princess Pañcāla,caṇḍī. He had Vedeha wed Pañcāla,caṇḍī wedded, thus making her queen of Mithilā. This effectively allied the two rajahs and brought peace between them and the whole of India.

At the end of the story, the Buddha identified Vedeha, the foolish king of Mithilā as Lāl'udāyī (J 546/6:648).

1.6.3 The (Sāriputta) Nibbāna,sukha Sutta (A 9.34). In the (Sāriputta) Nibbāna,sukha Sutta, we find a rare occasion when Lāludāyī humbly listens to a discourse by Sāriputta on nirvana, as the happiness that is not sensed (*avedayita,sukha*).³⁷ It is possible that either the subject is too profound for him to make any comment, or he has then mellowed with advanced age.

1.7 EVALUATION OF THE LĀL'UDĀYĪ STORIES. Almost all the stories about Lāl'udāyī given in the texts and Commentaries have been mentioned here, and they all have a common theme: *humour*. It is clear from his prefix *lāla* ("silly, foolish; talking foolish"), that Udāyī lacks wisdom and emotional maturity.

1.7.1 Overview. Here is a summary of the Lāl'udāyī stories we have mentioned. When an epithet is added to the traditional sutta name (given within parentheses), it *disambiguates* (makes unique) the title, so that the sutta is more easily identifiable.

(1) Soma,datta Jātaka	(J 211)	very timid, nervously forgetful	[1.2]
(2) Lāl'udāyī,thera Vatthu 2	(DhA 11.7)	very timid, nervously forgetful	[1.2]
(3) (Sāriputta) Nirodha Sutta	(A 5.166)	slow-witted, quarrelsome	[1.2]
(4) Lāl'udāyī,thera Vatthu 3	(DhA 18.4)	slow-witted, jealous	[1.3.1]
(5) Sūkara Jātaka	(J 152)	slow-witted, conceited, old	[1.3.2]
(6) Lāl'udāyī Vatthu 1	(DhA 5.5)	foolish, conceited	[1.3.4]
(7) Padañjali Jātaka	(J 247)	ignorant, conceited	[1.3.3]
(8) (Ānanda) Abhibhū Sutta	(A 3.80)	quarrelsome, jealous	[1.4]
(9) Mahā Kamma,vibhaṅga Sutta	(M 136)	ignorant, obtrusive	[1.4]
(10) (Anussati-ṭ,ṭhāna) Udāyī Sutta	(A 6.29)	ignorant	[1.4]
(11) Taṇḍula,nāḷi Jātaka	(J 5)	foolish, conceited	[1.5.1]
(12) Pasūra Sutta	(Sn 4.8)	foolish	[1.5.2]
(13) Naṅgalisa Jātaka	(J 123)	slow-witted, loyal	[1.6.1]
(14) Mahōsadha Jātaka	(J 546)	foolish	[1.6.2]
(15) (Sāriputta) Nibbāna,sukha Sutta	(A 9.34)	silent	[1.6.3]

Lāl'udāyī appears in at least *six suttas, six Jātaka stories, and three Dhammapada stories*, which attests to his importance as a religious character, from whom we can learn a few things. The stories generally present as a mildly slow-witted to wildly foolish character, and yet he is always closely associated with the Bodhisattva and the Buddha himself. We see him, for example, as the Bodhisattva's father in the **Soma,datta Jātaka** (J 211), and in one of the last ten Jātakas—the Mahōsadha Jātaka (J 546)—he is the rajah of Mithilā, while the Bodhisattva was his advisor and general.

³⁷ A 9.34/4:414-418 = SD 55.1; AA 4:194.

In at least the few stories—the **Naṅgalisa Jātaka** (J 123) and the **Mahôsadha Jātaka** (J 546)—we see Lāl'udāyī as a quiet, even regal, character; and in the **(Sāriputta) Nibbāna,sukha Sutta** (A 9.34), he is even depicted as quietly listening to Sāriputta's teaching.

1.7.2 Parallel characters. As a difficult character, Lāl'udāyī reminds us of another person close to the Buddha, namely, **Channa**, his charioteer when he was still Bodhisattva. Ever since Channa joined the order, he showed improper conduct (*anācāra*) by being arrogant and incorrigible even towards elders monks. He once cut down a tree shrine revered by the people to make space for a residence.³⁸ He despised all the other monks, thinking, “The Buddha is mine; the Dharma is mine!”³⁹ He counter-questioned his examiners during another Saṅgh'ādi,sesa proceeding against him.⁴⁰ Going in search of grass and sticks for his lodging, he damaged the cornfield of a certain brahmin.⁴¹ And he was generally disrespectful to others.⁴²

One of the last acts of the Buddha before the Great Parinirvana is to impose a posthumous corrective measure—the “supreme penalty” (*brahma,danda*)—on Channa. The Buddha defines the supreme penalty here as “Whatever the monk Channa wants or says, he is not to be spoken to, admonished or instructed by the monks” (D 9).⁴³ Effectively, this is a total boycott by the order. The closing of Culla,vagga 11 of the Vinaya records how when Ānanda conveys the supreme penalty to Channa at Ghoṣit'ārāma (in Kosambī), he faints at the thought of being boycotted by the order. He then goes into retreat to develop himself (V 2:292). **The Channa Sutta** (S 22.90) records, in a humorous tone, how he attempts to seek Dharma instruction from other monks, and how Ānanda admonishes him.⁴⁴ Apparently, no monk actually boycotts him, since they try to answer his questions, albeit careful to not offend him. In due course, he gains arhat-hood, by which the supreme penalty is automatically abrogated.

Lāl'udāyī, however, is a less difficult character than Channa, except perhaps that Lāl'udāyī is slow-witted while Channa is not. Perhaps, Lāl'udāyī is closer in character to **Culla,panthaka** (DhA 2.3), who similarly is unable to remember even a single stanza. His elder brother Māha,panthaka, in desperation, suggests that Culla,panthaka leave the order to support himself as a layman, since not knowing a single verse of chant, it would be difficult for him to obtain almsfood. The Buddha, in his compassion, teaches Culla,panthaka a simple, but effective, meditation, as a result of which he become a full-fledged arhat.⁴⁵

The Buddhist texts as we have them today do not tell us of Lāl'udāyī's fate, but if we notice the trend of spiritual development of those who closely associate with the Buddha, it is likely that Lāl'udāyī would attain arhat-hood in due course. Although the Commentaries do not present him favourably, the Suttas are more accommodating of people like Lāl'udāyī. The point is that we do not need to be wise first to benefit from the Dharma; it is in associating with the Dharma that we grow wise.

1.7.3 Motifs without stereotypes. Insofar as not-self (*anattā*) is a key concept in Buddhism, its stories and teachings make use of *motifs* instead of *stereotypes*. In literary terms, a **motif** is a recurring structure, contrast, or literary device than can help to develop or inform the text's main themes, and a **stereotype** is a generalization about a person or a group to whom we attribute a defined set of characteristics, which may be either negative ones or positive ones. Early Buddhist stories invariably employ their characters *as* motifs, that is, an embodiment or characterization of certain habits or behaviour patterns of greed, hate or delusion, or of charity, love or wisdom.

Such patterns are never fixed, but are simply occasions, even devices, for admonition or comment by the Buddha or Dharma teacher. Some characters, such as Lāl'udāyī, Channa, Culla,panthaka, and Deva,-datta, display habitual tendencies that are to be avoided or to be overcome by the practitioner. Others, like

³⁸ Saṅgh'ādi,sesa 7 = V 3:155 f.

³⁹ Saṅgh'ādi,sesa 12 = V 3:177 f.

⁴⁰ Pācittiya 12 = V 4:35 ff.

⁴¹ Pācittiya 19 = V 4:47.

⁴² Pācittiya 54 = V 4:113.

⁴³ D 9.6.4/2:154. Cf D 1:96 where it is used differently.

⁴⁴ S 22.90/3:133 ff.

⁴⁵ DhA 2.3/1:239-255.

the great saints (Sāriputta, Moggallāna, Mahā Kassapa, Ānanda, Kisā Gotamī, and Paṭācārā) or lay disciples (Citta the householder, Anātha,piṇḍika, and Visākha) embody qualities to be emulated by us.

In the early Buddhist view, even the most evil or difficult of persons, such as Deva,datta, can in due course grow out of their unwholesome habitual tendencies, and attain sainthood, even Buddhahood. The Buddhist story comprises *actions without actors*, momentary allegories, that entertain, instruct and liberate us. The evil act as foils for the good, and the good in turn shine as what the evil can evolve into. They are both the inseparable aspects of life, like light and dark, the one giving meaning and purpose to the other.

Understandably, in the Buddhist teaching, there are no religious stereotypes such as God, Purusha (Skt *Puruṣa*), the devil or Satan, Atman, Soul, or any being or idea that is or suggests some kind of unchanging entity. Since the God-religions are limited by their faith in and defence of an unchanging and unfathomable entity. It is not difficult for thinking Buddhists to accept a notion of something unchanging and unfathomable—even meaningless (at least in terms of human reason and language)—but this can be neither a being nor an entity. This can only be *nirvana* (*nibbāna*).

Cultural histories have shown that the God idea has always divided, enslaved, even destroyed, people and peoples, and where the powerful or wealthy or unhinged are misled by their notion of such an eternal God, they wreak widespread and lasting pain and tragedy. Often the unbelieving, the different and the weak are summarily disposed of or marginalized. Often enough, whole cultures (like the Incas, Mayas and other tribes) are annihilated. And when there are no enemies or “others” within sight, such people tend to turn against themselves through sectarianism, social injustice and persecutions.

The drive to dominate others is characteristic of the God-believer. To a large extent, modern learning, science, and the free press—and most importantly, the failures of the God-idea and its believers themselves—have effectively slowed down, but not stopped, their machinations and influences on society at large. Their attempts to dominate the world, and to convert “others,” have taken subtler and more insidious forms.⁴⁶

The existence of the duality of good and evil shows the meaning of life as that of unsatisfactoriness or suffering, that we are still incomplete, as it were. Our purpose of life, therefore, is to work towards a fullness of being that is enlightening and liberating. Such stories remind us that we must awake from the sleep and dreams of duality. For, we are ourselves, in part or wholly, those characters, those habitual tendencies. These stories mirror us.

2 *Anussati-t,thāna*

2.1 THE MEANING OF ANUSSATI-Ṭ, ṬHĀNA. The key term in **the (Anussati) Udāyī Sutta** (A 6.29) is *anussati-t,thāna*, which is resolved as *anussati* (“recollection”) and *thāna* (“place (literal and figurative), state, condition, base, base, ground (fig)”). The Sutta Commentary explains *anussati-t,thāna* as “the task of recollection regarding this threefold dhyana.”⁴⁷ In other words, they are objects of meditation of which we should *repeatedly* (*anu-*) direct our *mindfulness* (*sati*). The qualities are already there, as it were, and we need to *internalize* them. In other words, *anussati-t,thāna* and *anussati* are synonyms.

The prefix *-thāna*, however, is helpful in reminding us that these meditation objects are incomplete in themselves, but are only grounds (*thāna*) or steps to higher levels of mental cultivation. In the scheme of 40 meditation methods, these six meditations [2.2] work best for the faith-inclined, but only brings the practitioner to access concentration, that is, to the threshold of samadhi or dhyana.⁴⁸ On letting of the

⁴⁶ A good example is **World Vision** was founded in the United States in 1950, by Dr Bob Pierce, a young pastor and missionary, who had first been sent to China and South Korea in 1947 by the Youth for Christ missionary organization. World Vision is an international Christian relief and development organization whose stated goal is “working for the well being of all people, especially children.” Working on six continents, World Vision is one of the largest Christian relief and development organizations in the world with a \$2.6 billion budget (2007). World Vision believes that *witnessing from Christ* is a fundamental part of their relief work. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Vision.

⁴⁷ *Idam bhante anussati-t,thānan ti idam jhānattaya,saṅkhatam anussati,kāraṇam* (AA 3:357).

⁴⁸ See *Bhāvanā* = SD 15.1 (Diag 8.1).

pleasant state of such a recollection, we will then be able to totally (at least momentarily) clear away the mental hindrances and attain concentration.

As such, they are also known as “inspiring meditations” because they instill joy in the meditator.⁴⁹ Such meditations are especially helpful when we are stuck in our practice. These recollections joyfully dislodge us from the rut of distraction and mental hindrance. In other words, when we are happy, we meditate more easily and more effectively. This is known as “directed meditation” or “directed cultivation” (*paṇidhāya bhāvanā*), that is, we direct the mind to an “inspiring sign” (*pasādanīya nimitta*), as taught in **the Bhikkhuṇī Vasaka Sutta** (S 47.10).⁵⁰

2.2 THE (SAṆKHITTA) ANUSSATI SUTTA (A 6.9). There is a discourse, albeit a very brief one, called **the (Saṅkhitta) Anussati Sutta** (A 6.9), which lists the names of six inspiring meditations, calling them “bases of recollection” (*anussati-ṭ,thāna*), thus:

(Saṅkhitta) Anussati Sutta

The (Shorter) Discourse on the Bases of Recollection

[The six inspiring meditations that help the faith-inclined to gain access concentration]

(A 6.9/3:284)

- 1 Bhikshus, there are these six bases of recollection (*cha anussatiṭ,thāna*). What are the six?⁵¹
- 2 (1) The recollection of the Buddha (*buddhānussati*);
 (2) The recollection of the Dharma (*dhammānussati*);
 (3) The recollection of the Sangha (*sanghānussati*);
 (4) The recollection of moral virtue (*sīlānussati*);
 (5) The recollection of charity (*cāgānussati*); and
 (6) The recollection of the gods (*devatā'nussati*).

These, bhikshus, are the six bases of recollection.

— evaṃ —

The (Saṅkhitta) Anussati Sutta is referred to in the Visuddhi,magga as **the Gedha Sutta** (“the discourse on greed”),⁵² so called because they help overcome greed (*gedha*),⁵³ and its six meditations explained in detail in **the (Vitthāra) Anussati Sutta** (A 6.25), where *gedha* is said to be a name for the five cords of sensual pleasures (*kāma,guṇa*). These six meditations also help to overcome such *greed* in some beings.⁵⁴

These six meditations are also listed simply as “objects of recollection” (*anussati-ṭ,thāna*) in **the Saṅgīti Sutta** (D 33).⁵⁵ The same list appears in **the Das'uttara Sutta** (D 34) as “the states to be cultivated” (*dhammā bhāvetabbā*).⁵⁶

2.3 THE EKA,DHAMMA PĀLI (A 1.16). This list of meditations is expanded into ten in **the Eka,-dhamma Pāli** (A 1.16), that is, the above six, with the addition of the following meditations:

- (7) The mindfulness of breathing (*ānāpāna,sati*),⁵⁷

⁴⁹ See **Mental Cultivation** = SD 5 & *Nimitta* = SD 19.7(4.6.3(2)).

⁵⁰ See S 47.10.7-11/5:155 f = SD 24.2 also Intro (1.2).

⁵¹ For detailed study on these six meditations, see *Bhāvanā* = SD 15.

⁵² Vism 7.123/226 f. See **Agata,phala Mahānāma S** (A 6.10) = SD 15.3 Intro (2).

⁵³ Ñāṇamoli trs it as “cupidity” (Vism:Ñ 245).

⁵⁴ A 6.25/3:312-314.

⁵⁵ D 33.2.2(19)/3:250.

⁵⁶ D 34.1.7(2)/3:280.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| (8) The mindfulness of death | (<i>maraṇa,sati</i>), ⁵⁸ |
| (9) The body-based mindfulness meditation | (<i>kāya,gata,sati</i>); ⁵⁹ and |
| (10) The recollection of stillness | (<i>upasamānussati</i>). ⁶⁰ |

These ten meditations are said to be “one thing” or singular states (*eka,dhamma*), when cultivated and increased, brings about total revulsion, dispassion, ending of suffering, stillness, direct knowledge, awakening and nirvana.⁶¹

In either case, whether in the set of six or of ten meditations, they are all known as the bases of recollection (*anussati-ṭ,ṭhāna*). However, as we have seen above, they are better known as the set of six meditations.

2.4 ĀNANDA’S SIX BASES OF RECOLLECTION. The (**Anussati-ṭ,ṭhāna**) **Udāyī Sutta** (A 6.29) gives a set of six meditations that is different from the two suttas mentioned [2.2 & 2.3]. In answer to the Buddha, Ānanda gives a list of five meditations, and the Buddha adds in a sixth [§§2-7]. Ānanda omits a sixth meditation, which is actually the very first one, which the Buddha fills in for him at the end of his answer. So the final list of Ānanda’s six bases of recollection stands as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------|
| (1) Mindfulness and full awareness | [§7]; |
| (2) The first three dhyanas | [§2]; |
| (3) The perception of light | [§3]; |
| (4) The perception of foulness | [§4]; |
| (5) The nine charnel-ground meditations | [§5]; and |
| (6) The fourth dhyana | [§6]. |

This set of recollections—which we shall call “Ānanda’s six bases of recollection”—is clearly different from the better known set of six recollections of **the (Anussati) Udāyī Sutta** (A 6.29) [2.2] and **the Eka,dhamma Anussati-ṭ,ṭhāna Sutta** (A 1.16) [2.3]. In fact, Ānanda’s six bases of recollections could be regarded as *stages in meditation for attaining the fourth dhyana*.

— — —

⁵⁷ For a detailed study, see **Ānāpāna,sati S** (M 118/3:77-88) = SD 7.13.

⁵⁸ Also called “recollection of death” (*maraṇānussati*): see **Maraṇa,sati Ss 1-2** (A 8.73/4:316-319, 8.74/4:320-322); discussed in detail at Vism 8.1-41/229-239.

⁵⁹ For a detailed study, see **Kāya,gata,sati S** (M 119/3:88-99) = SD 12.21. Discussed in detail at Vism 8.42-144/2239-266.

⁶⁰ Discussed in detail at Vism 8.245-251/293 f.

⁶¹ A 1.16/1:30 = SD 74.9.

The Discourse to Udāyi (on the Bases of Recollection)

A 6.29/3:322-325

Originating at Sāvattihī.

Udāyi does not answer the Buddha

1a Then the Blessed One addressed the venerable Udāyi:
 “How many bases of recollection (*anussati-t, thāna*) are there, Udāyi?”
 When this was said, the venerable Udāyi remained silent.
 For the second time, the Blessed One addressed the venerable Udāyi:
 “How bases of recollection (*anussati-t, thāna*) are there, Udāyi?”
 For the second time, the venerable Udāyi remained silent.
 For the third time, the Blessed One addressed the venerable Udāyi:
 “How many bases of recollection are there, Udāyi?”
 For the third time, the venerable Udāyi remained silent.

Udāyi answers wrongly

1b Then the venerable Ānanda said this to the venerable Udāyi:
 “Avuso Udāyi, the Blessed One addresses you.”
 “Avuso Ānanda, I hear the Blessed One. [323]

Here, bhante, a monk recollects manifold past existence, that is to say, one birth, two births, three births, four births, five births, ten births, twenty births, thirty births, forty births, fifty births, one hundred births, one thousand births, one hundred thousand births, many aeons of cosmic contraction, many aeons of cosmic expansion, many aeons of cosmic contraction and expansion, thus:

‘There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-arose there. There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such my life-span. Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.’

Thus, he recollects his manifold past lives in their modes and details.⁶²
 This, bhante, is a base of recollection.”

1c Then the Blessed One addressed the venerable Ānanda:
 “I knew this, Ānanda, this Udāyi is a hollow person who does not dwell devoted to the higher mind!

The Buddha’s question, Ānanda’s reply

1d How many bases of recollection are there, Ānanda?”
 “Bhante, there are *five* bases of recollection. What are the five?

2 (1) THE FIRST THREE DHYANAS.⁶³ Here, bhante, a monk,⁶⁴ quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome mental states, he attains and dwells in the **first dhyana**, accompanied by initial application and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness, born of solitude.⁶⁵

⁶² This knowledge is detailed at Vism 13.13-71/411-423.

⁶³ This is an abridged statement; for the full formulas, see **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2.77-82/1:73-75) = SD 8.10.

⁶⁴ Here “a monk” (*bhikkhu*) may refer to either an ordained monastic or anyone who is meditating (DA 3:756; VbhA 216 f; cf SnA 251). See **Satipaṭṭhāna Ss** = SD 13.1 Intro §3.1a.

⁶⁵ On the omission of “one-pointedness of mind” (*cittassa ek’aggatā*) and “concentration” (*samādhi*) here, see **The layman and dhyana** = SD 8.5.

With the stilling of initial application and sustained application, by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind, he attains and dwells in **the second dhyana**, free from initial application and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness born of concentration.⁶⁶

With the fading away of zest, he remains equanimous, mindful and clearly knowing, and experiences happiness with the body. He attains and dwells in **the third dhyana**, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.’

This, bhante, is a base of recollection, when thus cultivated, thus made much, conduces to living at ease here and now.

3 (2) THE PERCEPTION OF LIGHT. And furthermore, bhante, a monk attends to **the perception of light**,⁶⁷ determines the perception of daylight: just as day is, so is night; just as night is, so is day. Thus through a mind that is open and unhindered, one should cultivate a mind of bright light.

This, bhante, is a base of recollection, when thus cultivated, thus made much, conduces to the attainment of knowledge and vision (of reality).

4 (3) THE PERCEPTION OF FOULNESS: THE 31 BODY-PARTS.⁶⁸ And furthermore, bhante, a monk reviews⁶⁹ this very body, wrapped in skin and full of various impurities, from the soles of the feet upwards and from the crown of the head downwards:

‘In this body there are⁷⁰

- (1) head-hairs, body-hairs, nails, teeth, skin;⁷¹
- (2) flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidneys;⁷²
- (3) heart, liver, membranes (around the lungs),⁷³ spleen, lungs;⁷⁴
- (4) large intestines, small intestines, stomach-contents,⁷⁵ faeces[, brain];⁷⁶
- (5) bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat;⁷⁷
- (6) tears, grease, saliva, snot, oil of the joints,⁷⁸ urine.⁷⁹

⁶⁶ The 2nd dhyana is known as “the noble silence” (*ariya, tuṅhī, bhāva*) because within it applied thought and sustained thought (thinking and discursion, *vitakka, vicāra*) cease, and with their cessation, speech cannot occur. (S 2:273); cf. S 4:293 where *vitakka* and *vicāra* are called verbal formation (*vacī, sankhāra*), the mental factors responsible for speech. In **Ariya, pariyesanā S** (M 1:161), the Buddha exhorts the monks when assembled to “either speak on the Dharma or observe the noble silence” (ie either talk Dharma or meditate).

⁶⁷ *Āloka, saññā*. As at **Samādhi Bhāvanā S** (A 4.41.3/2:45) = SD 24.1, & **Pacalā S** (A 7.58.7/4:86) = SD 4.11.

⁶⁸ As at **Satipatṭhāna S** (M 10.10/1:57) = SD 13.3. In the Suttas, this practice is called *asubha, saññā* (perception of foulness). The term *asubha, nimitta* (the sign of foulness) in Comys, refers to one or other of the 10 foul objects, ie bodily remains in one of the 10 stages of decomposition (Vism 6.1-11/178 f). On details of practice, see **Kāya, gatā, sati S** (M 119) = SD 12.21 Intro (5). See also **Vibhaṅga S** (S 51.29/5:277 f), on the analysis of will or desire (*chanda*).

⁶⁹ “Reviews,” *paccavekkhati*, see Intro (3.9b).

⁷⁰ For details, see **Mahā Rāhu’ovāda S** (M 62.8-11/1:421-423).

⁷¹ *Kesā lomā nakhā dantā taco*. The meditation on these 5 parts “with skin as the fifth” or “skin pentad” (*taca, pancake kamma-t, thāna*) (Vism 242=8.50) forms the basic spiritual practice first taught to monks at the end of ordination.

⁷² *Maṁsam nahāru aṭṭhi aṭṭhi, miñjā vakkam*.

⁷³ “Membranes,” alt tr “pleura,” *kilomaka*, ie a pair of membranous sacs surrounding the lungs.

⁷⁴ *Hadayaṁ yakanam kilomakam pihakam papphasam*.

⁷⁵ *Udariyam*, lit “that which is in the *udara* (stomach),” sometimes tr as “gorge” (Vism:Ñ 8.120/-122/258 f); technically, this includes chyme (food half-digested by gastric juices, expelled into the duodenum).

⁷⁶ *Antam anta, gunam udariyam karisam*. See M 3:90; KhA 38. Later traditions add the 32nd part—*matthake mattha, luṅgam* (lit “the brain in the head”) (Kh 3, Pm 1:6 f; Vism 8.42-144/239-266): the “brain” is not listed at S 4:111). Although “brain” is usually listed last, Comys list it as no 20, after “faeces” (KhA 60; Vism 8.126/260) in the set headed by “large intestines” since they have similar or related appearances. For a fascinating discussion on how ancient ascetics obtain such knowledge of the human anatomy, see Zysk 1998:34-37.

⁷⁷ *Pittam semham pubbo lohitaṁ sedo medo*.

⁷⁸ *Lasikā*, ie synovial fluid.

⁷⁹ *Assu vasā kheḷo siṅghāṇikā lasikā muttam*. Here there are a total of 31 parts of the body. See here (4)n.

This, bhante, is a base of recollection, when thus cultivated, thus made much, conduces to the abandonment of desire and lust.

5a (4) THE 9 CHARNEL-GROUND MEDITATIONS.⁸⁰ (i) And furthermore, bhante, just as if⁸¹ one were to see bodily remains [a corpse]⁸² thrown aside in a charnel-ground,

one, or two, [324] or three days dead, bloated, livid [discoloured], festering,⁸³

—so, too, he compares⁸⁴ this very body with that, thinking:

‘Such is the nature of this body: it will become like that—this is unavoidable.’⁸⁵

5b (ii) Or, again, just as if he were to see bodily remains [a corpse] thrown aside in a charnel-ground,

being eaten by crows,

or being eaten by hawks,

or being eaten by vultures,

or being eaten by dogs,

or being eaten by jackals,

or being eaten by various worms and bugs;

—so, too, he compares this very body with that, thinking:

‘Such is the nature of this body: it will become like that—this is unavoidable.’

5c Or, again, bhikshus, just as if he were to see bodily remains [bones] thrown aside in a charnel-ground,

(iii) a skeleton with flesh and blood, connected by sinews,

(iv) a skeleton, fleshless, smeared with blood, connected by sinews,

(v) a skeleton, flesh and blood all gone, connected by sinews,

(vi)⁸⁶ random disconnected bones, scattered in all directions, a hand-bone here, a foot-bone there, a shin-bone here, a rib there, a thigh-bone here, [D 2:297] a pelvic bone there, a back-bone here, a shoulder-bone there, a neck-bone here, a jaw-bone there, a tooth here, a skull there;

⁸⁰ That is, the 9 stages of bodily decomposition.

⁸¹ “**Just as if**,” *seyyathā pi*, alt tr “as though.” [14, 17, 26] “The phrase ‘as though’ (*seyyathā pi*) suggests this meditation, and those to follow, need not be based upon an actual encounter with bodily remains in the state of decay described, but can be performed as an imaginative exercise” (M:ÑB 1192 n150). **The Visuddhi, magga** details how a meditator can gain the first vision of a decaying corpse in a charnel ground and subsequently develop this vision while meditating in his dwelling Vism 6.12-69/180-190, esp §§6.62-64). **Ledi Sayadaw** says that this meditation could be done based on sick or wounded persons (incl oneself), or with dead animals as the object (TM nd:58). See also Analayo 2003:152-155.

⁸² “Bodily remains,” *sarīra*, or “the remains of a body.” The word *sarīra* (Skt *śarīra*) has two broad meanings: (1) the body (living or dead); (2) bodily remains (both bones or relics). The *Pali-English Dictionary* gives all these senses: **(1) The (physical) body** (D 1:157; M 1:157; S 4:286; A 1:50, 2:41, 3:57 f, 323 f, 4:190; Sn 478, 584; Dh 151; Nm 181; J 1:394 (six blemishes), 2:31, 3:53 (~*maṇsa*, flesh of the body) ; *antima, sarīra*, one who wears his last body, an *anāgāmī* (Sn 624; S 1:210; Dh 400). **(2) A dead body, a corpse** (D 2:141, 164, 295 f; M 1:58, 3:91): this is the sense used here in the Satipaṭṭhāna Ss. **(3) The bones** (D 2:164, 296; M1:58 f). **(4) Relics** (Vv 63, 32; VvA 269). In later works, the suffix *-dhātu* is added, ie *sarīrika, dhātu*, to denote “relics (of the Buddha)” (VvA 165, 269; Mahv 13, 167). In **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16 = SD 9), the word *sarīra* is used in all these different ways. See SD 9 §7d(1).

⁸³ Cf **(Cattāro) Padhāna S** (D 33.1.11(10)/3:225 = A 4.14/2:16 f) which says, “Here, bhikshus, a monk guards the auspicious sign of samadhi when it has arisen, that is to say, the perception [image] of a skeleton (*aṭṭhikam, saññam*), the perception of the worm-infested (corpse) (*puḷavaka, saññam*), the perception of the discoloured (corpse) (*vinīlaka, saññam*), the perception of the festering (corpse) (*vipubbaka, saññam*), the perception of the fissured (corpse) (*vicchidaka, saññam*), the perception of the bloated (corpse). (*uddhumataka, saññam*). This simpler Āṅguttara listing is probably older than the more systematized set of **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22.7-10/2:295-298) = SD 13.2.

⁸⁴ “He compares,” *upasaṃharati*, see Intro (3.9b).

⁸⁵ Notice the impersonal tone of the statement, reflecting the lack of ownership and not self, ie, the body is actually beyond one’s control [14, 16, 24, 30]. This is an application of the “specific conditionality” (*idapaccayatā*). See Intro 3.7c & SD 5.16(2).

—so, too, he compares this very body with that:

‘Such is the nature of this body: it will become like that—this is unavoidable.’

5d Or, again, bhikshus, just as if he were to see bodily remains thrown aside in a charnel-ground,

(vii) the bones bleached, looking like conch-shells,

(viii) the bones piled up, over a year old,

(ix) the bones reduced to dust;

—so, too, he compares this very body with that: **[325]**

‘Such is the nature of this body: it will become like that—this is unavoidable.’

This, bhante, is a base of recollection, when thus cultivated, thus made much, conduces to the uprooting of the ‘I am’ conceit.

6 (5) THE FOURTH DHYANA.⁸⁷ And furthermore, bhante, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain—and with the earlier disappearance of happiness and displeasure—one attains and dwells in **the fourth dhyana**, that is neither painful nor pleasant, and with mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.

This, bhante, is a base of recollection, when thus cultivated, thus made much, conduces to the penetrating of the various elements.⁸⁸

These, bhante, are the five bases of recollection.”

“Sadhu, sadhu, Ānanda! In that case, Ānanda, remember this *sixth* basis of recollection, too:

7 (6) MINDFULNESS AND FULL AWARENESS.⁸⁹ Here, Ānanda, a monk mindfully walks forward, mindfully steps backwards, mindfully stands, mindfully sits, mindfully lies down, mindfully determines his actions.

This, Ānanda, is the base of recollection, when this is cultivated, thus made much, conduce to mindfulness and full awareness.”⁹⁰

— evaṃ —

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⁸⁶ For variant readings, see PTS ed, D 2:296 f.

⁸⁷ This is an abridged statement; for the full formula, see **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2.83-84/1:75 f) = SD 8.10.

⁸⁸ *Aneka,dhātu paṭivedhāya samvattati.*

⁸⁹ This is an abridged statement; for the full formula, see **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10.8/1:57) = SD 13.3.

⁹⁰ Clearly, this sixth basis of recollection is the very *first* one, which Ānanda misses out. The Buddha is basically telling him that we have to have sense-restraint, moral virtue and mindfulness before we can get into dhyana. See Intro (2.3).